

El Centro Field Office

Law Enforcement Summary- for upcoming 04/05 Season

Note: During the 03/04 grant cycle, the El Centro Field Office received an OHMVR Law Enforcement Grant for the East and West Mesa areas. Although the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area was not funded with grant funds, we believe that project is of significant interest to the Commission and public stakeholders for California OHV recreation.

General:

- El Centro is working cooperatively with the BLM National Office and the American Sand Association on a safety education campaign.
- BLM will also be instituting an alcohol initiative this season in the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area.
- Our objectives for the season are the same as last year and will include:
 - Public Safety
 - Alcohol
 - Drug enforcement
 - Minors in possession of alcohol and/or illicit drugs
 - Resource protection.

Overall, the BLM feels that things are improving in the Dunes and continues to work cooperatively with the Imperial County Sheriffs Department. Together, both agencies are continuing to monitor compliance of the Competition Hill closure and will be assessing the situation as the season progresses.

BLM El Centro Resource Program

- West Mesa approximately 85% signed
- Law enforcement continuing to educate and enforce rules and regulations in the WECO area including:
 - The six limited camping areas in the Yuha
 - Enforcing restricted and limited OHV used in the Yuha to the three designated routes
- Starting new SCA crew of 12 members and two supervisors to conduct restoration in the Yuha, this is an increase of five more than last year.

Palm Springs Field Office

- Restoration crews on ground in Little Morongo Canyon, working

Needles Field Office

- The Student Conservation Association group is working on route restoration inside wilderness throughout the winter. They will be working on Bigelow Cholla Garden, Piute Mountains, and the Old Woman Mountain Wilderness Areas to begin with.
- The Field Office reprinted 1200 copies of the Eagle Pass, Turtle Mountains, Kingston wash, and West Well trail guides and stocks these at kiosk locations and the front office counter.
- Four volunteers have signed up to monitor and sign wilderness area boundaries throughout the winter.
- Park Ranger Matt McDonald has installed approximately 150 limited use area signs and approximately 1,000 open route signs in the Chemehuevi, Kingston, and Piute Mountains. Matt has also helped maintain brochures at kiosk locations, monitor visitor use, check traffic counters and surveillance cameras, and maintain the office dual sport motorcycles and quads for law enforcement.
- With the assistance of grant funding, the field office was able to hire two law enforcement rangers to fill vacant positions. One ranger is assigned to the Old Woman and Sheephole Mountain area. The other is assigned the Clipper, Marble, and Bristol Mountain area including Mesquite Hills and Crucero Critical Area of Environmental Concern (ACEC).
- Rangers issued 35 violation notices for OHV related offenses, made two DUI arrests off road, and responded to eight search and rescue incidents during the 2004 fiscal year.

Several areas were identified for the installation of post and cable barriers and the environmental documentation process started to allow for installation.

Ridgecrest Field Office

- Maintenance was performed on 200 miles of designated trails using heavy equipment; nearly 400 carsonite trail markers were installed.
- Refurbished 10 information kiosks in the Jawbone ACEC with colored maps, regulatory information, and map distribution boxes.
- Soil monitoring was performed in the Rand Mountains and Jawbone ACEC, using the OHMVR Soils Checklist.
- Conducted a courtesy sound check at Jawbone Station and assisted the California City Police Department with an amnesty check at Borax Bill Park.
- Installed new highway directional and identification signs at Jawbone Station, these signs have the new state parks logo on them.

- Education and safety patrols were conducted on all major holidays with over 2,500 brochures and maps being distributed during contacts and from information kiosk.
- Monitoring has started

Bishop Field Office

- Local motorcycle club volunteers active in patrolling OHV areas ensuring compliance.
- Audubon Society continues to monitoring Fish Slough ACEC and the Volcanic Tableland.
- Completion of OHV damaged wetlands restoration project and several smaller habitat fragmentation or landscape rehabilitations.
- Completed cultural research design and begun testing/sampling along OHV routes.
- Regularly patrolled OHV areas and the Inyo Wilderness, making visitor contacts, enforcing OHV laws and replacing signs as needed.
- Continued “early intervention” style program focusing on proactive and educational approaches to meet resource needs and provide quality recreational experiences.

Hollister Field Office:

Hollister Field Office

Clear Creek Management Area OHV Program/ Accomplishments and Issues 2003-2004 Season

- The Clear Creek Management Area (CCMA), located in San Benito and W. Fresno counties has had a mix of successes and challenges.
- Six new toilet facilities were installed at Oak Flat Campground and the staging areas.
- A stakeholders meeting was held November 2003 to address issues related to protection of the San Benito evening-primrose (*Camissonia benitensis*).
- A monthly newsletter was instituted in March 2004 to better inform stakeholders and users of management actions and issues related to Clear Creek.
- Last spring the California Native Plant Society and the Center for Biological Diversity filed a Notice of Intent (NOI) against BLM HFO for failing to gain OHV compliance in federally threatened *Camissonia benitensis* (CABE). An additional NOI has since been filed by the Blue Ribbon Coalition claiming lack of effective management within the CCMA.
- Currently, the NOIs remain in place and the HFO staff is in the process of protecting the remaining unfenced CABE sites in the CCMA. Grant funds are being used for this purpose. HFO has responded to both NOIs, and no suits are expected at this time.
- A new Clear Creek Project Coordinator (Brian White) was hired in June 2004. A new full-time route inventory and soil loss assessment position was established in August 2004 (Ron Gartland) to include responsibility for route restoration.
- In August 2004 the entire CCMA was flown using aerial digital imagery to complete the route inventory not in the current database. This imagery will also be used to provide vegetation analysis and as a reference to historical aerial imagery to determine any trends related to impacts of watershed resources.
- Grant funds are essential in providing materials and staff to meet resource management and protection goals for the CCMA.

- Volunteers:
- Volunteer Hours: 1500 hrs = \$9000.00 wage savings to the Federal government and State OHV Commission
- Activities included: Visitor services, patrolling, OHV compliance monitoring, and fence repair/installation.
- Volunteers were from both the OHV and non-OHV user groups.

- Visitation:
- 50,800 visitors, 25,000 contacted and/or assisted.
- Use levels remain high, particularly during holiday weekends. Early rainfall has promoted use earlier in the season this year.
- 3000 additional user maps printed and distributed to public.
- Registration of visitors to the CCMA is planned November 2004, as an additional management tool to improve visitor compliance and education.
- Law Enforcement:
- 10,000 LE contacts
- Ongoing compliance patrols by Project Coordinator, Park Ranger (PFT) and LEO (PFT).
- Two seasonal Park Rangers to be hired November 2004. Additional maintenance staff to be hired this winter. These positions are dedicated entirely to the CCMA project.
- Training for LE detail officers planned for November 2004. This support will supplement HFO LE on holiday weekends and for special events.
- 75 citations, 73 verbal warnings
- 25 Resource damage, 15 wilderness intrusion, 8 warnings issued, 23 “cold” reports of violation
- San Benito evening-primrose (*Camissonia benitensis*) Protection:
- In November 2003 as a result of continued non-compliance in two areas with protected habitat for the San Benito evening-primrose, BLM prepared an Interim Protection Strategy. The purpose of this Interim Protection Strategy is to improve protection of all known and potential habitat for *Camissonia benitensis* within the CCMA while the Plan Amendment process for route designation is ongoing. This strategy focuses on immediate management actions and protective measures which may be accomplished under existing authorities, primarily 43 CFR 8341.2. Key components of this strategy identify and prioritize areas for further protection, identify a range of management actions to implement protection measures, develop an implementation schedule, and address issues of non-compliance and closure. The BLM has been aggressively implementing this strategy. Two *Warning Notices* were issued as a result of trespass into protected areas in November 2003 and March 2004.
- OHV non-compliance, primarily motorcycle use in threatened/sensitive plant species habitat, continues to be a problem within certain areas of the CCMA. While a few occupied sites have experienced continuing OHV trespass, the majority of sites have been fully protected with 100 percent compliance. BLM has focused its efforts over the last use season on implementing additional protective measures on these few remaining sites. Approximately six miles of fence were constructed to protect the RNA, Larious Canyon, and Upper Clear Creek Canyon. One mile of fence in Larious Canyon was reinforced with steel cable. Vernal pools southeast of Spanish Lake were protected with steel pipe barrier.
- Approximately 2/3 mile of fencing will occur in Upper Clear Creek Canyon in November to protect remaining known populations of the San Benito evening-primrose.

- Permitted Events/participants:
- Timekeepers Motorcycle Club – Wild Boar National and Piglet Competitive Enduro Races
- Salinas Ramblers Motorcycle Club – Quicksilver National Enduro Competitive Race
- California 4 Wheel Drive Club – Molina Ghost Run 4WD Event
- Racers Under the Son Motorcycle Club (RUTS)

- Planning:
 - A Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Draft Environmental Impact Statement to complete route designations for Clear Creek was released for public comment in July 2004, with three public meetings held. Public comment period closes November 15, 2004.
 - Comprehensive route maintenance EA completed for corrective/routine/recurring route maintenance within the CCMA
 - EA completed for resource protection fencing at Jade Mill camping/staging area.
 - EA being drafted for entrance station as requested in 2005 OHV grant request.
 Location selected and project planning underway for the project.
- Route Assessment and Maintenance:
 - Environmental review of 400 miles of routes completed and screened through 11 resource management criteria.
 - State Soil Loss Assessments underway on 250 miles of routes.
 - Corrective route maintenance – 60 miles.
 - SWECO trail machine ordered; specially modified HEPA filtered cab for use in hazardous asbestos area. Expected delivery May 2005.
 - Route maintenance projects are being scheduled and prioritized for November-April implementation.
 - Best Management Practices and erosion control treatments implemented and monitored for effectiveness within Clear Creek Canyon.

Ukiah Field Office

South Cow Mountain OHV Area

- 55 Miles (45% of total) Trail Maintenance Completed (Spring 2004)
- Volunteer Clean-Up (10/16) - West Lake RCD and Scott's Valley 4H
- (Approximately 20 Volunteers)
- SUV Fun Run (May 2004) put on by the Mendocino 4X4 Club was a huge success (approximately 25 participants)
- Significant progress made by Mendocino 4X4 Club on Obstacle/Safety Course -- Plans finalized and work has begun
- Mendocino 4X4 Club Challenge scheduled for November 2004
- Large Volunteer day scheduled for Cow Mountain (November 2004)
- New Wet weather Closure Policy Implemented (October 2004)
- New Local Volunteer Group Formed (Ridge Raiders); participated in clean-up (October 2004)
- Santa Rosa 4X4 Club Volunteer Clean-Up (October 2004)
- 8-Mile Valley Road repair in land slide areas and culvert replacements
- 8-Mile Valley Meadow Restoration project scheduled for 2005

- Repairing minor head cuts in Lost Valley is scheduled for November 2005
- Access Gate repair and installation
- Traffic Counters purchased – planned installation in 2005
- Bridge Inspections conducted with BLM State Engineer (Summer 2004)
- Data collection for Resource Management Plan (RMP)

FY 2004 OHV Grant - Norris Aboriginal Trail Study

- Money was obligated and contracts were awarded to ethnographic consultant Diana Mongeau of Pinoleville Rancheria as well as Sentinal Archaeological Research.
- Diana Mongeau and our Tribal Relation's Liaison have been busy accumulating data on Norris Trail through both archival research at local historical societies, libraries, and educational institutions.
- Interviews with Tribal Scholars have been arranged and we will begin shortly. This particular aspect of the research is proving to be quite productive. Through this process, we have identified individuals who have living memory of use of the trail, some of whom have actually walked it themselves!
- Sentinal Archaeological Research has begun field investigations, working side-by-side with Tribal Consultants from both Pinoleville Rancheria and Scotts Valley Rancheria. They have developed a GIS modeling program and have already identified a number of well-preserved segments of the trail through ground truthing. Three previously unrecorded archaeological sites have also been identified.

Knoxville

- Major Clean-up at Hunting Creek Campground with CDF (Sept. 04)
- Trail Numbering system has been created, and will be implemented in 2005
- Map of area will be completed in 2005, once trail numbering system is in
- Rumsey Fire burned along the east side of Adam's Ridge – gate remains closed
- Traffic Counters purchased – planned installation in 2005
- Data collection for Resource Management Plan (RMP)
- New BLM LE Ranger fully delegated and patrolling this area 1-2 days per week

Eagle Lake Field Office

Fort Sage OHV Area

- Route monitoring was completed as required under the WHPP.
- Trailheads were maintained. Vault toilet pumped.
- Lassen County sheriff is under contract to provide patrols in and around the OHV area.
- BLM surveyors identified and staked the location of the fence that was designed to reduce conflicts with private property owners on the southwest side of the OHV area. The materials for the fence were also purchased.
- Fort Sage Mountains OHV Area bird study by Point Reyes Bird Observatory is completed and the final report will be available in January, 2005.
- Fort Sage Mountains OHV Area small mammal and reptile study being undertaken by the University of Nevada, Reno is underway. A progress report is due by January, 2005.

Northeast Plan

- Three field offices in north-east California are working on a combined Environmental Impact Statement, which will result in new Resource Management Plans (RMPS) for Eagle Lake (Susanville,) Surprise (Cedarville) and Alturas Field Offices.
- The BLM North-east Resource Advisory Council (RAC) has been very involved in the effort, and has been an important partner in many aspects of the scoping and alternative development, including the OHV Route Designation process. The planning team has held two sets of public meetings involving route designation, one for scoping, and a second to assess the proposed alternatives. The process is running very smoothly.
- The RAC has developed guidelines for OHV use on BLM administered lands which are being included in the RMPs for Eagle Lake, Alturas, and Surprise

Redding Field Office

Redding BLM OHV Accomplishments

- 100% Completion of the new Copley Mountain Staging Area, including: Installation of a permanent CXT vault toilet, post and cable barrier system, loading and unloading ramps, information sign boards, surface gravel, rock rip-rap, main entrance sign and trash receptacle.
- Continued maintenance on the newly reconstructed Coram Road, including graveling and grading, on approximately 2.5 miles of road way and rock armoring at critical culverts and drains.
- 25 miles of trail maintenance completed using SWECO trail tractor, hand crews and volunteer labor.
- Installation of approximately 50 new or replacement, carsonite trail marker signs.
- Held first public meeting for route designation process to review current route inventories on 2/10/2004.
- Completed route inventory following first public meeting, currently completing draft EA for route designation.
- Completed first draft of new Chappie-Shasta OHV map/guide. When completed, the map/guide will be a full color, double sided, 18x24, free public handout. Final map expected to go to print December 2004.

Arcata Field Office:

- Restoration work in the Thatcher Ridge WSA (repairing an old jeep trail, obliterating two dozer lines, and installing two gates with post/cable extensions) was completed in June 2004 under a Cooperative Agreement with Redwood Community Action Agency.
- The Samoa Dunes OHV Staging Area was paved in September 2004.

- The drinking water system was installed at the Samoa Dunes Staging Area in May 2004.
- The Sand Flea Grand Prix Race occurred again this year with 150 racers and sponsored by AMA and the local Kiwanis Club. Approximately \$10,000 was generated and will be spent on local charitable projects for the needy.
- Facilities maintained on a regular schedule include 14 miles of OHV trails, an ATV training site, the OHV staging area containing a restroom, picnic tables, and scenic overlook, the Cypress Grove Picnic Area containing a restroom and picnic tables, three kiosks, the 4x4 obstacle course, and sand drag.
- Annual OHV visitation remains at about 25,000 visits.
- Approximately 1,500 volunteer hours were spent supporting the management of Samoa Dunes. Most of this is due to our volunteer resident caretaker.
- Samoa Dunes was patrolled by law enforcement Rangers at least 3 days per week. Compliance remains high.
- Vegetative and wildlife monitoring continues on a regular and continuous basis.
- Weed removal from protected areas containing endangered plants was a success.

California State Office

State OHV Coordinator:

- Working with counterparts at BLM State and National Offices to develop national road and trail inventory standards, and guidelines for Comprehensive Travel Management and OHV designations.
- Attended coordination meetings with USFS Regional Office, as well as BLM and USFS field staffs to improve interagency coordination in Bakersfield BLM (Sequoia National Forest) and Redding (Shasta Trinity National Forest.)
- Will be meeting with Ridgecrest and Barstow BLM Staff, and CORVA to discuss OHV trail maintenance issues.
- Attended 3 public coordination meetings with Hollister Field Office Staff for Clear Creek Management Area.
- Attended National Sand Show and staffed BLM Booth with El Centro BLM Staff.
- Worked with Ukiah Field Office staff to assist in Recreation and Travel Management components of Resource Management Plan effort that the office is starting.

OHV Ecologist Program:

- Palm Springs Field Office Staff have started to implement the Restoration Grant funded program in Little Morongo Canyon.
- Ecologist Jim Weigand prepared an issue paper addressing the relationship of the OHV Grant Funded monitoring program with changes to on-the-ground management of public lands. The paper is included to this report.

Cultural Program:

- On Monday, October 25, 2004, the State Director and State Historic Preservation Office signed an amendment to our State Protocol for compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act. The amendment sets up an innovative strategy on how we will inventory, evaluate and address protection measures for the routes of travel on the California Desert. This resolves a decade long issue for this matter with the SHPO.

With this resolution, we may now move forward with our planned inventories and associated cultural resources studies associated with routes of travel on the California Desert.

- Due to the numerous requests from Tribal groups to provide archaeological site stewardship training, representatives from BLM, State Parks and the Society for California Archaeology have been meeting to develop a companion program for Tribes to the California Archaeological Site Stewardship Program (CASSP). We are presently developing a curriculum and the necessary training materials to meet the specific needs of the Tribes. We are planning on providing, at least, one training during 2005.

Adaptive Management and the Role of Monitoring on BLM Public Lands in California
Jim Weigand **10/27/2004**

Background

Several members of the OHV Stakeholders Group have asked me to prepare a briefing paper about the role of environmental monitoring as part of BLM adaptive management of public lands. The public's interest in the relation between adaptive management and monitoring stems from an interest in how and why BLM applies OHMVR Division funds for monitoring on public lands. Implicit in this interest is the wish that BLM conduct monitoring to validate continuing beneficial management or to justify new changes on the ground that support the missions of both the Division and the BLM.

To address these concerns and highlight the uses of monitoring on BLM public lands, I think it helpful to look at four cases of BLM monitoring funded by the OHMVR Division. These cases cover BLM lands in both northern and southern California. The descriptions here are synopses, but I would be glad to discuss these monitoring efforts and provide additional information.

Case 1 Rare Plant Protection - BLM Hollister Field Office

Camissonia benitensis is a Federally listed threatened plant species that occurs within a restricted geomorphic formation (stream terraces) within a locally and infrequently occurring soil type (serpentine or ultramafic soils) in the BLM Clear Creek Management Area (CCMA) and on some private lands nearby. The OHMVR Division funds staff, equipment, and materials (fencing, posts and cable, signs) to protect sites where the plant occurs or has occurred in the past. The management goal is to conserve plant populations from potential or known damage from OHV recreational riding and from downstream erosive habitat degradation resulting from OHV riding.

The BLM has an interim strategy for implementing conservation measures to protect *C. benitensis* until the CCMA Designation EIS - Plan Amendments are final. This strategy consists of a stepwise method to gain OHV compliance in sensitive species habitat. Installation of protective fencing is the first step. If BLM staff determines that public non-compliance with fencing and signing continues to occur, BLM posts notices warning the public of local or watershed closures. When non-compliance continues after warnings are posted where *C. benitensis* occurs, BLM closes these areas. Areas remain closed until compliance is achieved.

The BLM botanist and volunteers monitor vehicle incursions into protected habitat sites monthly during the OHV recreation season and bimonthly in the summer. The monitoring teams also count numbers of plants at sites during spring flowering.

In November 2003, the results of the monitoring indicated that OHV disturbance of *Camissonia* sites in some parts of the CCMA exceeded the threshold of non-compliance disturbances permitted under the Biological Opinion from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Once the number of incursions passed the threshold, BLM responded in a manner prescribed in advance by the Biological Opinion by closing the Lower Larious Creek watershed to motorized vehicles. This area remains closed. This area remains closed, pending completion of the CCMA Resource Management Plan Amendment.

Case 2 Desert Tortoise Habitat Protection - BLM Ridgecrest Field Office

Science information gained from monitoring desert tortoise populations in the Rand Mountain / Fremont Valley Management Area from the early 1970s through 1996 has been important in changing BLM management of the Area and specifically in the West Rand Mountains Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

The following actions occurred:

1. Closure of the West Rand Mountains ACEC in response to a Notice of Intent to Sue from the Center for Biological Diversity;
2. The OHMVR Division funded in part two tortoise population studies in the Area since 2001; and
3. The OHMVR Division funded field crews to camouflage and restore over 1,000 unauthorized OHV trails in the Area.

A notice of intent to sue from the Center for Biological Diversity prompted the BLM to act more immediately on USGS and BLM data related to desert tortoise populations in the Management Area.

The directed focus for follow-up population monitoring since 1996 is the baseline upon which efforts to restore unauthorized OHV trails to natural appearance and eventual ecological function. At four-year intervals, BLM will monitor with available funds desert tortoise populations to document a trend in desert tortoise populations in the ACEC and Management Years. Monitoring will determine whether the route restoration efforts have had a net positive impact on the desert tortoise by reducing functional habitat fragmentation stemming route proliferation.

In addition, for FY 2005, the BLM California Desert District is requesting funding for the US Geological Survey to test diverse methods for increasing stocks of annual high-nutrient forage plants for desert tortoises by manipulating soil seed banks. Monitoring the local desert tortoise population every four years demonstrates the effectiveness of active scientific management of desert tortoise food supply and habitat as means to increase desert tortoise populations and to improve physical health of tortoises.

This form of adaptive management seeks new management methods that broaden the base for a balance of robust desert tortoise populations in desert landscapes where people legally enjoy motorized travel access to public lands on designated routes.

Case 3 Flat-tailed Horned Lizard Habitat - BLM El Centro Field Office

Monitoring clarifies the impact of BLM actions designed to benefit ecosystems and species of special concern to BLM and to the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). The Flat-tailed Horned Lizard (FTHL) has been a species of management concern to BLM for many years in the Colorado Desert. CDFG lists the lizard as threatened, and twice the species has been proposed for listing by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. In 1997, multiple land management and regulatory agencies devised a conservation agreement and range-wide management strategy to reduce threats to the lizard. Agencies under the Flat-tailed Horned Lizard Rangewide Management Strategy evaluate the effectiveness of BLM management techniques to avoid the need to list the species federally as threatened. New knowledge about FTHLs acquired since 1997 led to a revision of the Strategy in 2003.

Under the Strategy, five FTHL Management Areas (MAs) were established, three of which are managed by BLM in California: East Mesa, West Mesa, and the Yuha Basin. Other BLM lands cited in the Strategy for conservation actions are the Dos Palmas ACEC and the Coachella Valley Preserve along with Ocotillo Wells SVRA and Anza Borrego Desert State Park.

The Strategy calls for population estimates of FTHLs for each MA to determine whether current management and techniques are adequate to conserve habitat and protect populations. The goal of the Strategy is to maintain a population of at least 5,000 lizards per MA. If populations drop below this threshold, then BLM land managers must implement measures to further protect the lizard. Decisions about specific measures rely on the best judgment wildlife biologists in consultation with other resource managers at other agencies to produce results that meet the population targets.

With monitoring funded by the OHMVR Division in FY 2002, 2003, and 2004, BLM wildlife biologists at the El Centro Field Office have baseline data on the populations of FTHLs in all three FTHL MAs under the El Centro Field Office jurisdiction. During the summer of 2004, BLM wildlife biologist and contracted crews gathered a second season of population data in the Yuha Basin. These data are critical for detecting trends in FTHL populations over time. In addition to population monitoring, the BLM wildlife biologists at El Centro have provided technical assistance to the BLM Palm Springs Field Offices and to other agencies on monitoring and researching FTHLs.

In FY 2005, BLM has requested both funding from the Division for monitoring and for restoration in the East Mesa FTHL MA. Through funding from the Division, BLM is able to determine a population baseline through its mark-recapture studies, develop methods to make population estimates more accurate, document through compliance monitoring progress made in closing and restoring unauthorized OHV trails, and monitor changes in lizard populations as the pattern of OHV travel and access changes in the MAs.

This monitoring intends to show the effectiveness of BLM management actions to restore land damaged by illegal activities and to increase the populations of FTHLs over time. Several years of monitoring data are necessary to determine whether the FTHLs are increasing because year-to-year changes in food availability make a definitive long-term trend difficult to detect in the short-term.

Case 4 Remote Sensing for Adaptive Management of Dove Springs OHV Open Area – BLM Ridgecrest Field Office

The applications of remote sensing image have created novel ways to do “retrospective” monitoring. US Geological Survey scientists analyzed imagery on file at the USGS and BLM to chart the proliferation of OHV trails in the Dove Springs OHV Open Area since the 1960s.

Results from the image analysis noted little expansion of OHV route proliferation in the 1990s after a great increase in the two previous decades. In the one-kilometer buffer around the Open Area boundary, OHV routes and resulting bare areas were developing while in other parts of the Open Area OHV travel has not occurred in 20 years. The emergent pattern of use indicates that BLM should adjust the original OHV Open Area boundaries established by the 1980 California Desert Conservation Area Plan to reflect actual use and to protect by regulation the areas currently inside the Open Area that are not part of OHV use and recreation.

The response time at BLM for adjusting OHV Open Area boundaries varies depending on the cycle of management. The management plan for the Jawbone-Butterbrecht ACEC, where Dove Springs is located, is scheduled for revision in this decade. When revising the ACEC management plan, BLM resource specialists at the BLM Ridgecrest Field Office will use this and other evidence from natural resource inventories, administrative studies, monitoring, and habitat and route restoration to make adaptive changes in management of the Dove Springs OHV Open Area.

Further Information

I look forward to talking with the Stakeholders about monitoring and adaptive management on BLM lands. BLM does not have an exclusive monopoly on good ideas about adaptive management for ecosystems. Public interest in BLM monitoring protocols and programs improves monitoring.

Please telephone or e-mail me whenever you have questions or if I can provide more data or information to the OHV Stakeholders Meeting. I can be reached at my office telephone: (916) 978-4656.or at jweigand@ca.blm.gov.

Yuma (California Lands)

Yuma Field Office (California Lands)

- Information kiosks have been constructed by Arizona Western College.
- BLM staff from the Yuma and Palm Springs Field Offices conducted a site visit and decided to place the kiosks at alternate sites along Highway 95 that would reach a wider audience.
- Coordination with Cal-Trans and NEPA compliance is in progress.

- A law enforcement partnership between Palm Springs and Yuma Field Offices has been implemented and LE monitoring is in progress.
- Law Enforcement has noted a relatively high amount of OHV use in the area during weekends and mid-week evenings.